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SUBJECT: UNSC SENDS CLEAR MESSAGE: ELECTIONS MUST TAKE
PLACE JULY 30

REF: KINSHASA 937

¶1. (U) Summary: Following a three-day visit in the DRC, a delegation from the UN Security Council (UNSC) announced it was "encouraged" by the country's political progress and rebuffed calls for a "dialogue" that would delay July 30 elections or lead to a re-negotiation of transitional institutions. The members warned DRC political leaders against ethnic-based hate messages in the upcoming campaign period, and urged a climate of peace and tolerance. The delegation promised that the international community would continue to support the DRC after elections. End summary.

¶2. (U) The nine-member UNSC delegation arrived in Kinshasa the evening of June 10 on the final leg of a 10-day African visit to Sudan, Ethiopia, Chad and the DRC. Headed by French Ambassador to the UN Jean-Marc de la Sabliere, the members met June 12 with President Kabila, and separately with the DRC's four vice presidents. Noting that elections were just a "stage," de la Sabliere said the Congolese must "put their house in order," and emphasized the need to accelerate army integration and to establish good governance.

¶3. (U) After the meeting with Kabila, de la Sabliere said the delegation had expressed concerns that the increase in debate over "Congolese identity" could reignite ethnic tensions. De la Sabliere said Kabila agreed that the political debate should be calmed down. At a press conference June 12, de la Sabliere said the DRC's elections were just the first step for the Congolese to "put their house in order," including work in accelerating the integration of the military and reinforcing the practice of good governance. Nonetheless, de la Sabliere said the delegation was "encouraged" by the Congo's political progress and promised the continuing support of the international community after elections this year.

¶4. (SBU) A June 11 working lunch of the UNSC with the 16 members of the International Committee to Accompany the Transition (CIAT) was useful to share information and impressions, and review major concerns over the remaining period of the DRC transition, as well as the post-election period. Both groups were on the same page, focused on the elections themselves, problems with the Congolese army, GDRC budget and economic issues (including corruption), and post-election challenges. Both the CIAT and UNSC members expressed strong concerns over the prospect of an extended period of weak government and unclear authority as elections get under way until a new government is eventually formed, likely toward the end of the year.

¶5. (SBU) The UNSC also had a useful discussion with the

Security Sector Joint Commission, chaired by Vice President Ruberwa, which includes broad representation by senior GDRC civilian, military and police officials and foreign Chiefs of Mission. Council members delivered some strong messages about the need for further improvements within the military, centered on reform, discipline, and an end the predatory practices and human rights violations too common among FARDC troops. Some members posed sharp questions regarding the size, affordability, and projected capability of the eventual unified Congolese army. Congolese presentations from Ruberwa, the Ministers of Interior and Defense, the Army Chief of Staff, and the agency heads responsible for military integration, demobilization (DDR), and military justice were better than past sessions, covering essential points and plans. The Army Chief of Staff, however, concentrated in familiar fashion on problems and the need for more help rather than his own efforts to solve problems.

¶16. (U) The UNSC delegation also met June 11 with a variety of Congolese political actors during their visit. In a meeting with Independent Electoral Commission (CEI) President Abbe Apollinaire Malu Malu, the delegation expressed its support for the electoral calendar published by the CEI and the need to respect the July 30 election date. Separately, the High Media Authority President Modeste Mutinga called upon the Security Council to help end what he called a "hate campaign" by some of the country's 33 presidential candidates. Mutinga said certain candidates have been using the media to insult their rivals and question others' nationalities.

¶17. (U) Council members met with Monsignor Laurent Monsengwo, the Archbishop of Kisangani and president of the Congolese Conference of Catholic Bishops, who has been critical of the

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electoral process and a leading voice in favor of political "dialogue." The delegation reportedly told Monsengwo that Congolese churches should actively encourage that the current electoral timetable be respected, leading to elections on July 30.

¶18. (SBU) The delegation did not meet with Etienne Tshisekedi, the president of the opposition Union for Democracy and Social Progress (UDPS), who is boycotting the elections. Arrangements had been made for Tshisekedi to meet with de la Sabliere and potentially a few other UNSC representatives at the French Ambassador's residence June 11. Tshisekedi, however, apparently contacted the UN saying that he would instead send lower-level representatives to the meeting. At that point, the UN decided to cancel the session.

¶19. (SBU) In an evening reception hosted by the French Ambassador, several of the UNSC members commented to the Ambassador that they had been impressed by the vigorous criticism offered by various political figures in the sessions they held with political parties and civil society. It appeared that at least several were surprised how willing political figures were to offer outspoken criticism.

¶10. (SBU) Comment: The widely anticipated UNSC visit struck exactly the right chord. The Council effectively eliminated any doubts about international community opposition to a new "dialogue" that would delay elections. The delegation's call for respecting the CEI's electoral calendar and holding elections July 30 provided the Electoral Commission a needed dose of support and credibility at a critical time. The UNSC was obliged to meet with President Kabila and the four Vice Presidents consecutively, not as a group as in previous visits, underscoring the worsening relations among the members of the "Espace Presidentiel." End comment.

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